

Political candidates overlook Tuscarora Nation

🕒 October 22, 2020 👤 Robesonian 📁 Letters 💬 2




To the editor,

Are the members of the Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina invisible to the presidential candidates of the United States?

Recent discussions on the acknowledgement of Native American Tribes in N.C. have made their way into the 2020 presidential election. However, this discussion did not include the broken treaties of the Tuscarora Nation or the Tuscarora People.

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The Tuscarora Nation is an aboriginal Carolina tribe that has inhabited the Southeast for thousands of years. The permanent settlement of English colonists in the early 1700s led to the Tuscarora Wars, which resulted in the signing of multiple Tuscarora treaties. The treaties of 1711 with Virginia and the treaties of 1712 and 1714 with North Carolina formally acknowledged the Tuscarora Nation as a sovereign and separate government.

While the colonial wars fractionalized the Tuscarora Nation, bands of the Nation remain and thrive in Robeson County. Although the treaties have been broken for over three centuries, the Tuscarora Nation stands resilient in the face of endless paper and historical genocide.

Many political and presidential candidates seem unaware of the presence of the Tuscarora Nation and their place in N.C. history. The Tuscarora Nation has received no assistance from local or national departments during the onset of the natural disasters and the worldwide pandemic we are currently experiencing.

The reaffirmation of these treaty rights by local and national leaders would help the Tuscarora recover from COVID-19 and address centuries of injustice.

Donnie "Red Hawk" McDowell

Shannon



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November 14, 2020
OAKWOOD, Ga. — How do you follow up a record-breaking performance in a conference championship?

[...]



From the fringe

November 14, 2020

Fairmont's week in review



October 19, 2020

To the editor,

The Robeson County School Board has once again achieved their goal of being the laughing stock of North Carolina school boards.

Not too long ago, we went through a hire and fire of a superintendent because he was from out of the county and our board wanted to continue down the same path of failure they have always been on.

Now we have rid ourselves of another local superintendent and installed an interim who only recently left the board because she failed to meet the basic requirement of living in her district. In addition, a consultant from out of the area quit in record speed ... wonder why?

These geniuses are in charge of our children's education. They are more of an impediment than COVID-19.

Fred Bergh

Lumberton

Family Medicine Physician urges local churches to implement COVID-19 safety measures



September 15, 2020

To the editor,

COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of life, including our faith. This season has caused us to be more creative and rethink how we do everything in order to protect ourselves and our community. These are unprecedented times for all of us.

[...]

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2021 Beginner Beekeeper School starts Jan. 26.

November 14, 2020
LUMBERTON — The 2021 Beginner Beekeeper School will be in session starting Jan. 26.

[...]

•



Senior students' art on display in A.D. Gallery at UNCP

November 14, 2020
PEMBROKE — The University of North Carolina at Pembroke senior capstone exhibition titled "The Unwritten Language" will be on display at the A.D. Gallery on campus through Thursday.

[...]

•



I encourage area pastors and leaders to be extremely cautious about rushing to have traditional church. You must continue to be faithful, without fear, while using Godly wisdom. Your actions should be motivated by love and faith, and not by fear.

As a physician that has dedicated my career to this community for the last 22 years and a believer in my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I implore the faith-based community to be considerate of the health and safety of others as well as yourselves. Scientific research is a tool of wisdom, not the enemy of faith.

People in our community are still dying from COVID-19. I have personally lost at least three patients. I grieve with the families of all those who have lost loved ones due to this dreaded virus. We all need to do our part to keep our community as safe as possible and do so without compromising our call to ministry. The safety of our community should be a part of that ministry.

The following are suggestions to consider:

- Consult local health officials for guidance on safety and information on the degree of community spread in your area;
- Consider the elderly and the vulnerable, who may feel torn between attending out of obligation and their own personal health if the church doors open;
- Consider whether your facility can accommodate a worship gathering, while still practicing social distancing;
- Consider multiple options for worship, including two or three worship services, to cut down on how many people are in the building at one time;
- Provide multiple stations for hand sanitizer;
- Consider temperature checks;
- Require face coverings be worn during church gatherings and provide them for those who may not have one.

True leadership is tested in times of crisis. My prayer during this season is that we all do as the Lord requires of us in Micah 6:8 to do justly, love mercifully and walk humbly before God.

Robin Peace, MD

Southeastern Health medical staff president

School board owes the people an explanation for the firing of Wooten

TV Week – November14, 2020

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What’s Happening

November 14, 2020
•Nov. 26

[...]



Carolina Civic Center to make Sweet Potato Pie a part of Thanksgiving menu

November 14, 2020
LUMBERTON — The Carolina Civic Center will serve up some Sweet Potato Pie this Thanksgiving as part of its virtual concert offerings.

[...]



September 14, 2020

To the editor,

On the morning of Sept. 10, I read that the Robeson County school board fired Shanita Wooten this week. All I know is what I read, that the superintendent was fired and temporarily replaced with Loistine DeFreece.

I realize that HR laws limit release of certain personnel information. In this case, it seems that the school board should have prepared a public statement with at least a general reason for Ms. Wooten’s release. Clearly, they knew ahead of time that her firing was a possibility.

Perhaps they released Ms. Wooten because of incompetence. Maybe she committed fraud. Was she mishandling the COVID-19 situation? Or she was on the wrong side of the board’s politics? These are pure speculations on my part because the board didn’t give us any information.

If Ms. Wooten was fired for incompetence or fraud, why is she receiving nine months of future pay? If not, why did the board fire her in the midst of this already messy school year?

My concern isn’t just about Ms. Wooten. It’s also about the board and how it makes these major and expensive decisions. I don’t have a personal interest in this issue, but I think our county is owed an explanation by those we voted in to make such important decisions.

Mary Storms

Lumberton

Fix Robeson County’s heart, fix her problems



Harger Lightning & Grounding’s facility in Fairmont gets Gold Safety Award for 2nd consecutive year

November 14, 2020
FAIRMONT — The Harger Lightning & Grounding plant in Fairmont recently was honored for the second consecutive year for efforts to keep the workplace safe.

[...]



Facility that takes holistic approach to caring for adult dementia patients coming to Pembroke

November 14, 2020
PEMBROKE — The Holistic Adult Day Care and Health Agency will soon accept clients after being placed on hold awaiting state certification.

[...]



September 01, 2020

To the editor,

Over the past 13 years, I have come to know the people and conditions of Robeson County. Yes, we are the poorest county in North Carolina.

Yes, we need to put people to work. You have heard me ad nauseam repeat my refrain that the Lumbee Tribe with it's current \$20+ millions in federal funding MUST develop a construction industry that builds safe housing when employing a massive work force.

The problems of Robeson County do not begin nor do they end in economics. Will having jobs, safe housing and purchase power begin to improve all areas of Robeson County? Yes, but this isn't just about a buck stopping somewhere.

Robeson County needs to expand Medicaid because we are an ill county. We have a depressed, illiterate, drug addicted, abusive, sexist, misogynist and often times prejudicial work force. We need medical and psychological resources to offset a lot of these "anomalies of the South."

We are a Bible Belt county and we have tendencies that bog down progressive approaches to progressively increasing social problems and societal Achilles heels.

We need education and a technical school, and we needed it 10 years ago. Our young people were being schooled at home long before coronavirus. They were learning how to be drug dealers, baby factories and how to get to the post office for their monthly check.

So when it comes to representing Robeson County in Pembroke, Lumberton, Raleigh or Washington, D.C., your voice must speak across all of these issues.

The only business models that don't fail in Robeson County are the ones that depend on an uneducated population who care enough about survival to allow themselves, when needed, to be treated as second-class wage earners without benefits and oftentimes without dignity.

The economic potential of Robeson County is not going to change until we fix her heart, her hands, her mind, her back and position her eyes toward a better future.



Two Christmas events set for Dec. 4 in Fairmont

November 14, 2020
FAIRMONT — Although Fairmont's "Twilight" Christmas parade had to be cancelled because of issues related to COVID-19, two other portions of the 13-year-old event still will be offered this year.

[...]



The holidays are here; important to prepare turkey safely

November 14, 2020
Can you believe it? Thanksgiving is literally right around the corner.

[...]



Diabetes and nutrition

The other victims of ignoring COVID-19 on campus

[...]



August 18, 2020

To the editor,

The decision to move to online classes at UNC-Chapel Hill will have a severely negative impact on the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers on the campus, who are predominately from communities of color and can least afford likely job cuts and furloughs.

These hardworking employees may lose their income and their health care in the middle of a pandemic all because students refused to follow simple rules and act responsibly.

This recklessness endangered many employees who work in the classrooms, residence and dining halls and grounds there, and will continue at all of our 17 UNC System campuses until these young adults act in a responsible manner.

Officials at the UNC System and state leaders must now step up to ensure these families don't fall through the cracks through no fault of their own.

In-person instruction is possible if our college campuses enact and enforce strict mask-wearing and social distancing measures, with harsh penalties for those who violate them. Administrators should be allowed to institute fines for anyone on campus not wearing a mask or socially distancing.

Personnel in positions of authority should monitor residence halls and enforce these mandates. Curfews should be enacted for dorms with automatic expulsion if a student violates them.

The national offices of sororities and fraternities should make it clear they will pull the charters of any chapters whose members willfully do not comply.

It's time to get tough. College students are not children in an elementary school classroom. They are adults. They are capable of wearing masks. They are capable of respecting social distancing. It's time for them to take responsibility.

People in the traditional student demographic are capable of following rules to keep themselves and others alive.

This generation has already proven it is ready to step up in a time of great crisis. From the debates over gun control following the Parkland shooting to the recent Black Lives Matter movement, our next generation of leaders are already leading.

They can absolutely wear a mask. They can show enough control not to throw parties. And they can be held accountable when they don't. This isn't summer camp. It is a place of learning and where thousands of North Carolinians earn their living and get their health care.

Ardis Watkins

State Employees Association

of North Carolina executive director

Meet challenges of new school year with consistency, safety, trust



August 11, 2020

To the editor,

As the school year reconvenes, I am reminded how a trauma-informed lens can benefit our children and their education.

Many of our children, and their families, are in a state of survival and experiencing intense emotions. Educators, parents, and the community are facing professional challenges, as well as personal ones. In fact, COVID-19 has impacted us all in some way. Encountering transitions and new expectations brings uncertainty, fear and losses. Using a trauma-informed approach, we can safely navigate this uncharted territory by focusing on our strengths and opportunities to use new systems to build new connections.

First, it is important that communication is clear and that expectations are clearly articulated. Students, staff, families, etc. feel much safer when guidelines are clear and concise.

Secondly, we can also rely on each other for support right now. If we take the time to understand that this process is difficult for us all (no matter in what way), we can be sources of empowerment and support for each other. It is also vital that our children stay connected with each other, while also building a sense of new normalcy through consistent routines. Although virtual learning may transform the future of education, we can still promote social interaction, encourage socio-emotional learning, use experiential learning, and have a stable schedule.

Lastly, and most important, we must have self-compassion. The ability to overcome these new challenges relies on our consistency, safety, and trust. We need each other the most right now!

Love and blessings,

Jacqueline Carthen

Red Springs

Child care workers deserve access to insurance



August 10, 2020

To the editor,

Robeson County is among the poorest in our state. This is no secret.

What we often do not consider are the many different effects of our low income. One of the most important and unappreciated groups of low-income workers are child care providers, who make up part of the backbone of our communities. They are identified as essential workers for good reason. Without them, parents could not work and our children will be less prepared for school.

In Robeson County, the child care rate of pay is substantially lower than counties of similar size. Though their pay is wildly disparate to their counterparts in neighboring counties, these providers are still held to the same educational standards. Even sadder is the fact that child care providers often do not have health insurance and many do not make enough money to qualify for the federal health-care exchange. This is one of the many reasons Medicaid expansion is so important.

As parents go back to work, these educators are expected to perform their best while having limited or no access to health care if they fall ill. Most have no access to regular checkups and benefits those with health insurance take for granted.

Medical care is on all of our minds during this current pandemic, but it has been on the minds of child care professionals a lot longer due to the fact that they have been without health insurance for many, many years. We drop our children off and expect they be given the best care, now it's time for us to expect the best care for those who care for our children. With an upcoming election, please join me in keeping this issue in front of our elected officials and potential elected officials. Support Medicaid expansion for working people like our child care professionals.

Tim Little

Lumberton

NC Innovative School District opts for remote learning for first nine weeks.



July 28, 2020

To the editor,

Like many school districts across the state, the NC Innovative School District considered many factors in determining the best way to move forward in starting the 2020-21 school year. We evaluated input from community stakeholders and partners, teachers, and parents to develop a recommendation.

According to the most recent announcement from Gov. (Roy) Cooper, there are two viable options for reopening schools in the state; they are designated as Plan B and Plan C. Plan A, which would have all students back in schools with minimal social distancing, is not allowed at this time due to ongoing health concerns associated with the increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the state.

Plan B is a hybrid model that includes a combination of in-school and online instruction along with reduced school capacity, social distancing, face-coverings for staff and students, symptom screening and other health protocols. Plan C is a remote learning model where students will receive instruction online from the safety of their homes.

Out of regard to student and staff safety as well as concerns I've received from the community, I am recommending to the State Board of Education that we begin the school year at our school in Rowland, N.C., Southside Ashpole Elementary, with Plan C for at least the first nine weeks. The Board will vote on my recommendation at their August meeting.

The best way to ensure students grow and achieve is face-to-face instruction and we will eventually get to the point when we can get students back into school. Until then, we must put safety first. We will continue to monitor and assess the COVID-19 situation and the associated health risks and modify our instruction plan accordingly.

James Ellerbe, Ed.D.

Superintendent, NC Innovative School District

Religious leaders need to encourage their followers to wear a mask during the pandemic



July 23, 2020

To the editor,

This letter is for the preachers, priests, rabbis, imams, and other religious leaders of Robeson County.

I wear a COVID-19 mask. Occasionally, I ask strangers in public places or public jobs why they do or don't wear masks. In the last two weeks, two people (about half of the non-maskers I asked) have responded that they don't wear masks because they're in God's hands, or something to that effect.

Religious leaders, I don't know what your mask-wearing guidance has been to your congregations. Perhaps you haven't given any guidance. Maybe you agree that God will protect all righteous people, so they don't need to take any precautions to protect themselves, their families, or their proverbial neighbors.

If not, please address this issue in your upcoming sermons and teachings. Your message might save a life, if not a soul.

Mary Storms

Lumberton

Businesses, community need to help parents of school kids meet demands

of work, online learning



July 22, 2020

To the editor,

I do not want to debate the school reopening plan and the decision that has been made. Nothing a school system does will be right for every parent or every child, and it's truly a no-win situation.

I want to propose ideas to help parents and students for this first nine weeks (maybe longer) to be successful. Communities need to step up and help those parents who have struggled since March. Get creative, plan, do something!

EMPLOYERS, BUSINESS OWNERS: Can you work with your employees who are parents, especially elementary kids? Can you stagger schedules? Can you give your employees an alternative schedule that works with a kid's schedule? Can your employee work from home? Can you provide some kind of childcare on site for your employees?

CHURCHES, COMMUNITY CENTERS: Can you open up and help with child care and provide a safe, supervised place for students to learn? Kids could bring their laptops and their lunches. You could have volunteers or even paid staff help the students get logged in and begin their school day while giving parents a place to drop off their kids when they went to work. This would avoid parents worrying over their children who might be left home alone or with elderly relatives who may not be able to properly assist the child with technology. Maybe the church or community center could provide snacks for kids during their scheduled break times for learning. This supervised instruction could be offered at a small fee if needed.

RETIRED TEACHERS, PROFESSIONAL TUTORS: Can you open up your home for a student or small group of students to have a supervised, safe place to complete online school work? This would work the same as the idea for churches and community centers.

We could do all this while taking necessary COVID-19 precautions as well — hand washing, temperature checks, individual student work stations, social distancing, masks — whatever

the childcare center, church, community center, private home, etc. would like to require.

It can be done, but we don't have a lot of time! Can we help each other? We are all in this together.

Concerned parent and educator,

Wendy Fields

Lumberton

Lives trump reopening schools



July 15, 2020

To the editor,

OK, here's the real deal. NOTHING is more important, at the basic human level, for those of us who are human beings, whether students, teachers, staff, etc., than life itself. Not the economy. Not politics. Nothing. It doesn't matter in the long run if public education, or any other kind of education, is put on hold for a time, even if that is for an extended time. The very lives of students, teachers, staff, and all their families (grandpa and grandma included) are more important than any particular semester or year of school. Students can be taught later on. Lives lost now because of COVID infection cannot be regained later on. Regardless of what the governor or the superintendent says, this is the bottom line for humans.

Help us stay alive! We'll get to educating the young when the time comes in which that can be done safely. Don't fool yourselves, or anyone else. It cannot be done safely now. Anytime 15 or 20 humans get together in a classroom, regardless of masks or 6-feet distances, or whatever, the likelihood of exposure to COVID increases. Especially in Robeson County, where rates of infection are already soaring. What will you tell your family, or the families of teachers, staff, etc., when one (or a dozen or more) of those precious lives are lost because we just couldn't wait until we can control the spread of the virus far better than we can now?

I don't care where you fall on the political spectrum. This is about human lives. Yours. Your family's. Mine. My family's. Nothing is more important, at the basic human level, for those of us who are human beings, whether students, teachers, staff, etc., than life itself. Nos perituri mortem salutamos. Sola resurgit vita. (We who are about to perish, salute death. Life alone resurges.)

Stan Knick, Ph.D.

Rowland

Fear-mongering editorial off mark



July 14, 2020

To the editor,

The Lumberton City Council got into a bitter disagreement while rejecting a location for a public housing project proposed for East Fifth Street. The implications rise above politics and personalities.

An editorial this month in The Robesonian suggested that disagreeing in public was improper behavior for a municipal governing body. But papering over important issues of race, housing and governing with a veneer of civility does not serve the public or the situation at hand.

Let's not tiptoe around it, this issue is about race. Moving mostly black and minority residents of public housing out of the flood plain to the east side of the city met with resistance that had race at its core.

The East Fifth Street location is a good choice. The city Planning Board thought so too, voting 7-1 in favor of the site.

For the three black city councilpersons, taking this loss quietly was not an option. The vote halted a much-needed low-income housing unit that was to be located next to a mobile home park in a mostly empty corridor.

Should there be a protest rally at city hall? In a separate July editorial, this newspaper not-to-subtly promoted the idea that violence follows Black Lives Matter protest marches. But a BLM march in Lumberton already happened with not a hint of violence, despite unfounded rumors of all kinds.

In a third editorial on this page, The Robesonian called BLM marchers in Pembroke and elsewhere “idiots.” What do we call people who believed busloads of rioters were coming to Lumberton?

To set the record straight, the Pembroke march was staged from UNC Pembroke and included the chancellor, administrators and a few students while people carrying guns harassed peaceful marchers.

Inferring that these marchers were rioters is fear mongering of the worst sort. To ascribe any virtue to gun-toting people is utterly irresponsible.

Lumberton has been a civil community through the decades of the Civil Rights movement. The city is effectively policed with regard for the dignity of its citizens. (I stand to be corrected here, but I doubt it.)

The mayor, city council and this newspaper have dug a hole for themselves and the entire city on race relations. They need to find locations for public and affordable housing, quickly, and fix what went wrong in the build up to this problem.

Scott Bigelow

Lumberton



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